TRANSGENDER MEDICINE

Witta Monika Strobl, M.D., Assoc. Prof. (retired), Institut für Medizinische Chemie und Pathobiochemie, MUW

The past decade has seen a considerable improvement in the situation of transgender (TG) persons in many European countries. In this context TG persons have become increasingly visible in the health care system. Only few medical professionals, however, are aware of their special health care needs and their particular risk profile. Moreover, TG persons still are confronted with prejudice and discrimination when accessing general health care (1).

This lecture will give an introduction to the TG phenomenon from the perspective of a physician who herself is TG. The lecture will focus mainly on medical aspects: the epidemiology of gender dysphoria, the hypotheses concerning its etiology as well as the current diagnostic criteria and standards of care will be presented (2). The question, whether being TG is indeed a disease will be critically discussed. The historical process, which lead to the concept of gender variance as a mental disorder that should managed and treated by physicians and psychotherapists will be reviewed briefly (3). The present efforts to end the pathologization and stigmatization of TG persons and the human rights issues associated with being TG will be summarized.

1. Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, Ver. 7, The World Professional Association for Transgender Health, 2011. http://www.wpath.org/site\_page.cfm?pk\_association\_webpage\_menu=1351&pk\_association\_webpage=3926

2) Transgender Euro Study: Legal Survey and Focus on the Transgender Experience of Health Care, Whittle, S., et al. (ILGA Europe) 2008. http://www.pfc.org.uk/pdf/eurostudy.pdf

3) Human Rights and Gender Identity, Issue Paper, T. Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, 2009. https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1476365